

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Representatives Brian Higgins (NY-27), Louise Slaughter (NY-28) and Kathy Hochul (NY-26) sent letters to both the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and Colgan Airlines demanding to know why emails sent by Colgan Air, related to the qualifications of the pilot who crashed Continental Flight 3407, were not presented during the initial crash investigation.

The Members of the Western New York delegation wrote to Colgan Air and its parent company, Pinnacle Airlines, asking why their emails were never disclosed to the NTSB and are seeking further information on what criteria the airline used to determine what to disclose. In a separate letter to NTSB, Higgins, Slaughter and Hochul asked the board to explain the "party" process generally used to investigate crashes, how the Colgan investigation could have benefitted from these emails, and whether they would have led to NTSB providing additional recommendations.

"There is no question that these are emails should have been disclosed to the NTSB," said Congressman Higgins. "We'd like to know why they weren't, and how failure to do so may be impacting flight training and safety policy recommendations stemming from the Flight 3407 investigation."

"These newly released emails raise a haunting question: what else haven't we seen?" said Congresswoman Slaughter. "We must make sure that for future investigations, the NTSB has every tool they need to ensure all relevant information is shared."

"I have no doubt that this investigation must be reopened," said Congresswoman Hochul. "We've heard one thing in hearings, but these newly released emails, in my judgment, point to a cover-up. We need to get to the bottom of this. My constituents, the Flight 3407 families, and the flying public deserve no less."

Below are copies of the letters sent by Reps. Higgins, Slaughter & Hochul:

The Honorable Deborah A.P. Hersman

Chairman

National Transportation Safety Board

490 L'Enfant Plaza, SW

Washington, DC 20594

Dear Chairman Hersman:

We write to express our strong concern regarding recently released correspondence between Colgan Air senior safety officials that questioned the ability of the Captain of Continental Connection Flight 3407 to operate the Bombardier Dash 8-Q400, the model of the plane that crashed February 12, 2009 in Clarence Center, New York.

This is especially troubling in light of your agency's laudable investigation, which determined pilot error to be a key cause of the Flight 3407 crash. Your public hearing held in May 2009 and the final report issued in February 2010 provided numerous critical safety recommendations that ultimately served as the framework for P.L. 111-216, 'The Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Act of 2010'. Your efforts served to highlight important issues such as pilot training and fatigue, the use of safety management systems such as FOQA and ASAP by regional airlines, and the process of screening and selecting pilots for employment.

It is our understanding that this internal Colgan correspondence was not provided to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators as part of the pilot-in-command's personnel file during the Flight 3407 investigation. While we understand that the safety board investigates thousands of accidents and incidents per year with limited resources, and commend NTSB for completing the investigation on this watershed accident in such a timely and thorough manner,

October 25, 2011

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we are concerned that all relevant documentation should have been provided to the NTSB by the designated parties at the time of the investigation.

To that end, we would like to request that you explain the "party" system the NTSB uses to investigate crashes generally, how the Colgan investigation could have benefitted from these emails, whether they would have led to NTSB providing additional safety recommendations regarding the screening and selection of pilots for upgrade, and what NTSB's mode of recourse is if a party doesn't disclose pertinent information during the investigation.

Thank you again for the important work that you do to improve transportation safety and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

October 25, 2011

Mr. Sean Menke Mr. George Casey

President and C.E.O. President and G.M.

Pinnacle Airlines, Inc. Colgan Air, Inc.

1689 Nonconnah Blvd. 1769 Paragon Drive

Suite 111 Suite 100

Memphis, TN 38132 Memphis, TN 38132

Dear Mr. Menke and Mr. Casey:

We write to express our strong concern regarding recently released correspondence between Colgan Air senior safety officials that questioned the ability of the Captain of Continental Connection Flight 3407 to operate the Bombardier Dash 8-Q400, the model of the plane that crashed February 12, 2009 outside of Clarence Center, NY.

We understand that your airline was designated as a party to the National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) investigation process. As you know, the facts and information provided during the investigation becomes the basis for NTSB's accident report and ultimate findings of the probable and contributing causes and safety recommendations. It is the responsibility of each participating party in the investigative process to provide all documentation that yields evidence to that end.

It is our understanding that the correspondence in question was not provided to National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigators during the Flight 3407 investigation. In light of this, we request that you explain your participation in the NTSB investigative process, what criteria you used to determine what information to disclose to the NTSB during the investigation, and why these emails were not included in this disclosure. Furthermore, we request that you provide us with information on your company's screening and selection process for pilots to be upgraded; as the emails expressed significant concern for Captain Renslow's readiness to upgrade, and yet he was allowed to transition to the Q400 a month later.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,